



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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**MEMBERS OF BRADENTON BASED HEROIN TRAFFICKING
ORGANIZATION FOUND GUILTY**

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced a jury found three individuals guilty of conspiracy to distribute heroin in the Bradenton area. Those found guilty were ISMAEL ROLON AYALA, a.k.a. "Flaco," age 24, JUAN BAUTISTA LUGO, age 20, and HUGO SALAZAR, a.k.a. "Mexico," age 27. All three men are from Bradenton, Florida.

The defendants face a minimum of ten years' imprisonment up to life imprisonment. They were indicted on September 23, 2004, along with Jean Carlos Mejias Castro, age 36, of Brandenton, Florida. On January 6, 2005, Castro pled guilty to conspiracy to distribute and possession with intent to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin. In addition, Castro also pled guilty to a second count of aiding and abetting in the distribution of a quantity of heroin, the use of which resulted in the death of Michael Andrew Tippery, Jr. in June of 2003. According to court records, during the charged conspiracy, beginning

in 2001, Castro allegedly smuggled heroin from New York City to the Bradenton area where his co-conspirators distributed the heroin. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

The case was investigated by the United State Drug Enforcement Administration, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office, Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and the Sarasota Police Department and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kathy J.M. Peluso and Special Assistant United States Attorney Lt. Diane Croff.